

Message Text

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22

ACTION ARA-10

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INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7304

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CI, ELAB, PINT

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY OVER ARRIVAL OF "ICFTU SOLIDARITY SHIP"

1. SUMMARY: ARRIVAL OF 172 TONS OF FOOD, CLOTHING, MEDICINE AND TOYS FROM "SECOURS POPULAIRE FRANCAIS" CONSIGNED TO CARITAS/CHILE HAS TOUCHED OFF MINOR CONTROVERSY AND CONFUSION AS TO WHETHER GIFT IS ICFTU'S MUCH PUBLICIZED "SOLIDARITY SHIP." CARITAS HAS NOT IDENTIFIED SOURCE OTHER THAN "SECOURS," BUT APPARENTLY BELIEVES IT TO BE FROM ICFTU. THEY SAY THAT GIFT WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AS DONORS WISH, TO DETAINEES, FAMILIES AND THOSE SUFFERING EXTREME POVERTY. SCURRILOUS PRESS AND EVEN GOC TOOK POSITION THAT "MARXIST SHOW HAS FAILED" AND IMPLIED CARITAS TIED TO MARXISTS; THESE BARBS SIMPLY DREW ATTENTION TO SHIPMENT, WHICH OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE GONE UNNOTICED LOCALLY. END SUMMARY.

2. RADIO MOSCOW'S RECENT CLAIMS (AS REPORTED IN LOCAL PRESS) THAT THE "SOLIDARITY SHIP" AUTHORIZED BY LAST YEAR'S ICFTU CONGRESS IN MEXICO CITY HAD ARRIVED IN CHILE, PROVOKED A MINOR FLURRY OF PRESS COMMENT, PRINCIPALLY

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IN AFTERNOON "LA SEGUNDA." MOST LOCAL ACCOUNTS IMPLY THAT A

SHIPMENT OF FOOD AND CLOTHING WHICH ARRIVED IN VALPARAISO ON JANUARY 24 ON THE FRENCH FLAG "ANJOU," CONSIGNED TO "CARITAS/CHILE," WAS NOT THE GIFT OF ICFTU AFFILIATES. "SEGUNDA" TRIED TO SHOW THAT CARITAS WAS ACTING -- WILLINGLY OR NOT -- AS PART OF THE "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST" CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILE.

3. CARITAS/CHILE HAS DONE LITTLE TO CLEAR UP THE MYSTERY OF THE SOURCE OF THE DONATIONS. THEY ISSUED A PUBLIC STATEMENT IDENTIFYING THE SOURCE ONLY AS "SECOURS POPULAIRE FRANCAIS," A FRENCH ORGANIZATION. CARITAS CLAIMS THIS ORGANIZATION COLLECTED DONATIONS FROM VARIOUS EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND SHIPPED THEM TO CHILE UNDER THE EXISTING AGREEMENT BETWEEN WEST GERMANY ("DEUTSCHER CARITAS VERBAND FREIBURG") AND CHILE.

4. A LETTER FROM CARITAS VICE PRESIDENT FATHER BALDO SANTI TO LABATT OFFERED MORE DETAIL BUT FAILED TO IDENTIFY SHIPMENT AS THAT OF THE MUCH PUBLICIZED ICFTU SOLIDARITY SHIP. THE LETTER INDICATES THAT THE "SECOURS POPULAIRE FRANCAIS" COLLECTED THE 172-TON DONATION OF FOOD, CLOTHING, MEDICINES AND TOYS FROM VARIOUS EUROPEAN COUNTRIES DURING SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR. IT CONFIRMS THAT THE SHIPMENT ARRIVED IN JANUARY AND THAT CARITAS TOOK THE UNUSUAL STEP OF ASKING FOR A POLICE ESCORT FROM THE DOCKS TO THEIR WAREHOUSES WHERE, WITH GOC REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT, THEY UNPACKED AND INSPECTED THE SHIPMENT "BOX BY BOX -- PIECE BY PIECE." THEY EVENTUALLY FOUND NO "ANTI-CHILEAN PROPAGANDA" OR CONTRABAND OF OTHER TYPES. THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR CONFIRMED THIS STATEMENT PUBLICLY, ALTHOUGH HE ALSO ALLUDED TO THE MARXIST CAMPAIGN.

5. FATHER BALDO ALSO STATED THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WISHES OF "THE DONOR," THE SHIPMENT WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO:

(A) DETAINEES OR THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILIES, AND

(B) INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES SUFFERING EXTREME POVERTY.

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6. FRENCH EMBASSY HERE INFORMS US THAT "SECOURS" IS "LINKED WITH FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY" AND THAT PART OF SHIPMENT WAS INVOICED FROM "SECOURS," REST FROM GERMAN CARITAS. THEY SAY BOAT WAS LOADED IN GERMAN PORT.

7. COMMENT: CARITAS' KID GLOVE HANDLING OF THE "SECOURS" SHIPMENT LEAVES LITTLE DOUBT IN OUR MINDS THAT THEY AT LEAST BELIEVE THIS IS THE CONTROVERSIAL ICFTU DONATION.

GIVEN CARITAS' CAREFUL, UNPUBLICIZED HANDLING OF THE
SHIPMENT, FEW IN CHILE WOULD HAVE KNOWN ANYTHING OF ITS
ARRIVAL IF THE GOC AND PRESS HAD NOT BUILT IT UP, IN
RESPONSE TO MOSCOW RADIO AND OTHER EUROPEAN PUBLICITY.
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